

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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P R 252220Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4809

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAN SALVADOR 0760

E.O. 11652 NA

TAGS; PFOR, ES

SUBJ: ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS: DUARTE TELEVISION ADDRESS

REF: SAN SALVADOR 0748

1. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER NAPOLEON DUARTE APPEARED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION EVENING OF FEB 24 IN NAME OF THE UNO OPPOSITION COALITION. SPEECH WAS PRECEDED BY FILMCLIPS OF CROWDS AT AIRPORT AND AT RALLY WHO GREETED HIM ON HIS ARRIVAL FEB. 22 (REFTEL).

2. DUARTE BEGAN HIS HALF HOUR ADDRESS BY OFFERING THANKS TO PEOPLE AND GOVT OF VENEZUELA AND ESPECIALLY TO PRES CALDERA ("A MAN OF GREAT HEART") FOR GIVING HIM A "SECOND HOMELAND" DURING HIS TWO YEAR STAY IN CARACAS. HE CONGRATULATED ALL THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF VENEZUELA, OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT, WHO HAVE CONQUERED THE PROBLEM OF DICTATORSHIP AND REPRESSION BY THEIR HONEST PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WHICH, HE HELD, EL SALVADOR HAS YET TO DO. INTERESTINGLY, DUARTE ALSO THANKED THE SALVADORAN COURT MARTIAL WHICH EXONERATED HIM OF GUILT IN THE MARCH 1972 ABORTIVE COUP AND LAUDED THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR SENSE OF JUSTICE.

3. DUARTE INTERPRETED HIS ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME AS NOT ONLY A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIGN OF PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR HIM BUT A REAFFIRMATION OF THE

DESIRE FOR CHANGE THAT PROMPTED THE PEOPLE TO VOTE FOR HIM IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TWO YEARS AGO. AND, HE CONTENDED, THE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY CANNOT BE RESOLVED, ITS "INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS" CANNOT BE OVERCOME, UNLESS THERE IS TRUE STRUCTURAL REFORM IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRY. NOTING THE ECONMIC PROBLEMS FACING EL SALVADOR, HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, SOARING COST OF LIVING-DUARTE HELD THAT IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR THE GOVT TO BLAME THE PROBLEMS ON EXTERNAL FACTORS (DOLLAR DEVALUATION, ENERGY CRISIS). IN FACT, MANY OF THE PROBLEMS STEM FROM THE BASIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY WHICH EXISTED LONG BEFORE THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SCENE. IF CLASS STRIFE, VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL CHAOS ARE TO BE AVOIDED, BASIC CHANGE MUST COME.

4. TURNING TO THE MARCH ELECTIONS, DUARTE URGED THE AUDIENCE TO THE POLLS AND HELD ELECTIONS THE ONLY LEGITIMATE MEANS TO POWER. HE CHALLENGED THE GOVT TO ALLOW THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM TO WORK, ESPECIALLY BY PERMITTING FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. DUARTE CONCLUDED BY PROMISING THAT NEITHER UNO NOR THE OTHER OPPOSITQON PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (PPS, FUDI) WOULD OBSTRUCT GOVT PROGRAMS THAT ARE IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE.

5. COMMENT: DUARTE WAS SINCERE AND SELF-CONFIDENT, AND OBVIOUSLY HAS NOT LOST HIS SKILLS AS ONE OF EL SALVADORS BEST POLITICAL SPEAKERS. HE BECAME PERHAPS A BIT TOO EMOTIONAL AND SHRILL AT ONE POINT BUT MOST OF HIS ADDRESS WAS MEASURED AND TO THE POINT. THE TONE OF THE SPEECH WAS ESSENTIALLY CONCILIATORY AND WHAT HE DID NOT SAY WAS PERHAPS AS SIGNIFICANT OF WHAT HE DID SAY. DUARTE NEVER FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON THE DISPUTED 1972 ELECTIONS, NEVER MENTIONED PRES MOLINA BY NAME (HE REFERRED ONLY TO "THE GOVT") NOR DID HE TOUCH ON THE MARCH 1972 COUP OR HIS ROLE IN IT. IN FACT, HE STRESSED THE NEED TO REMAIN WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL BOUNDS AND RESOLVE POLITICAL ISSUES THROUGH THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. HIS THANKS TO THE MILITARY AND HIS PROMISE TO THE GOVT THAT OPPOSITION REPRESENTATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WOULD NOT BE USED TO OBSTRUCT POSITIVE PROGRAMS PERHAPS WERE INTENDED AS SIGNALS TO THE GOVT THAT HE WILL TAKE A FAIRLY POSITIVE STANCE VIS A VIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE MOLINA REGIME PROVIDED THE OPPOSITION CAN PARTICIPATE FREELY IN THE MARCH ELECTIONS.
MOSKOWITZ

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